



Faith and Words

James 3:1-12 |

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SUMMARY

Our tongues are terribly inconsistent, James tells us. They can't make up their minds. Are they formed by God for his praise, or for cussing out someone under our breaths?

James gives us a picture from God's good creation: a spring that people draw water out of to sustain daily life. If you live in the city, then you are several steps separated from the source of your water. But if you ever happen to wander across a spring while out hiking, you'll notice that they do not come with fixtures for turning them from hot to cold, or from mineral to reverse osmosis. Springs are what they are.

James gives us another image for the same reality: olive trees and fig trees. If you plant an olive tree, it's likely because you're hoping to enjoy some olives. Though if you've planted a classic olive tree, don't expect to have a steady harvest anytime soon! The slow-growing trees take 65 to 80 years to reach stable yields! But imagine your great-grandchildren anticipating eating olives and getting figs instead!

But human beings, James says, have the remarkable capacity for growing mixed fruit and springing forth with surprisingly salty speech.

It's not simply a matter of doing the wrong thing, though. James is telling us that "it should not be so" because Christians are supposed to have God's word growing up inside us, changing us more and more into the likeness of Jesus, our elder brother.

Take some time as a group to read through James 3:1-12. Then ask these questions:

1. What stood out to you as you read today?
2. What point does James seem to be making?
3. How does this portion of Scripture connect to what came before? How does it connect to what comes after?
4. What didn't make sense? What do you still wonder about?
5. What does your speech reveal about what is growing up inside of you?"